

[19 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

Misunderstanding about India's Missile Programme

3657. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pakistan readies 3000 KM Ghaury III to counter Agni" appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 22nd January, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the International community has charged India for having started an unnecessary arms race in the region by test firing Agni II and if so, the steps taken by Government to nullify the misunderstanding in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has already decided to induct the Agni-II system based on our security needs.

(c) India's programme is a purely defensive response to regional developments affecting our security.

Tunnel near Indo-Pak Border

[†]3658. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a tunnel has been found recently in a field near the Indo-Pak border;

[†]Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have ascertained the persons involved in this case; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) A tunnel, the digging of which was still in progress, was detected on 1.1.2001 about 55 yards on our side from the border-fence in the general area of Chauntra in Gurdaspur. The entry point of the tunnel was found to be in Pakistan, about 50 yards away from the International Border.

A Court of Inquiry has been ordered in this regard.

Death of Air Force Personnel in Kutch

†3659. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the Indian Air Force personnel and their family members who died in Kutch airbase due to recent devastating earthquake;

(b) the type and quantum of assistance provided to them by his Ministry;

(c) the number of houses destroyed/damaged; and

(d) what is Government's action plan for restoration of normal

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.